

[Ruth Kanipe]

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Ruth Kanipe, Textile Worker

Newton, N.C.

Ethel Deal, Writer,

Dudley W. Crawford, Reviser. Original Names Changed Names

Ruth Kanipe Ruby Knox

mpb

"I'll give you my story, if you'll answer a question for me. I'm thirty years old and not married. Can you tell me why I can't hold a man. Every one I go with leaves me for another girl. I've wanted to get married for a long time but the ones that have proposed, I wouldn't have. What is wrong with me?"

"Loose about twenty five pounds," I said; "pay more attention to your personal appearance and see how attractive you can be".

"I can't lose I get so hungry, I guess about the only way is to look in the mirror whenever I get hungry, and remember what eating's going to do for me.

"About that personal appearance, it seems like I never have time. I go to work at seven and get up about six thirty. I know my clothes look like I'd called for them to follow me when I run out the door. I don't even take a bath in the morning. Must be the way I was raised.

Library of Congress

"We was poor share croppers and never had much time to think about looks, even mother worked in the field with us when she was able. Our family was large, five girls and two boys. When fall came and the cotton was sold we had to pay our debts, buy a few clothes and nothing more. Dad worked all winter by the day to buy flour and meat. Mother did not have the things she needed in the house. The cook stove was rusty and the dishes cracked.

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"About the time I was fourteen I got sick and tired of grubbing. One day at dinner I told my parents I was going to town and get a job. Dad never said a word, he's that kind. Mother is a timid little soule soul, scared of her shadow. She'lowed as how I'd never been in a mill and wouldn't know how to work. I told her I could learn and I was going to buy her some things for the house. She'd heard awful tales of the people working in the mill, she was scared to death. But I went on anyway and stayed at Grandmother's in town.

"I got me a job spinning. My pay was eight dollars a week. This looked big to me, but I gave Grandma three dollars for board, that left me five dollars. I had never had that much in my life before and I was Proud.

"After six weeks I got a job at the hosiery mill. They put me to looping. I got eight dollars a week while I was learning. When they gave me a machine I worked by the dozen. Soon I was making good money I opened a bank account and started to save money. I bought mother a lot of things she needed, and clothing for the children. I gave her a whole set of kitchen furniture including a big wood range. I spent the week ends at home and went to church, I'm a Lutheran. We didn't have a spare bedroom so I bought a whole suite in grey enamel.

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I wanted a place to invite my friends, so I furnished the living room through out, and bought a radio.

Library of Congress

"For several years the mill run good and I made five dollars a day. Its not doing that well for the past three years. Wages has been cut, and I don't make much now.

"The first car I bought was a roadster. I didn't keep it long I traded it in and bought a large car so I could take the whole family.

"I moved the family to town and one of my sisters got work, Dad works when he can get it. One of my sisters got married and the rest are in school.

"I've been working sixteen years. I've bought three cars, paid all the doctor's and hospital bills, kept the family in clothes and helped buy the groceries.

"Last year we bought the house we live in. I had it painted and a bath room put in. Mother is very proud of the gift I got her, a new set of kitchen furniture in green and ivory. The old crack cracked dishes and pots are a thing of the past. Sometimes she says, 'Ruby you seem more like a man than a woman, see a like you know what abody needs and goes and gets it. Now your daddy never pays a bit of attention to when the wood gives out, or the flour tin is empty, he just depends on you'.

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"I guess that is part of my trouble, I don't put any time and thought on myself.

"Do you reckon if I'd get up early in the morning, take a bath, put on fresh clothes, and go to the beauty parlor about once a week I could get me a man? But, heck, I'm hungry as a wolf."